WALTER SCOTT'S
ersonality Parad

Parade 2-6-72

Q. *Can you even approximate why President Nixon escalated our bombing of North Vietnam in the last week of 1971 when we had lost only one American soldier the week before?—David Klein, Newark, N.J.*

A. Secretary of Defense Laird explained in a TV interview on Dec. 30, 1971, that the main reason was to reduce the number of American casualties and protect our remaining troops.

Since only one American soldier had been killed during the previous Christmas week and at least four U.S. pilots were shot down during the air escalation, Laird's explanation lends itself to doubt.

Most probably Nixon escalated the bombing in response to General Creighton Abrams request, in order to impede the flow of enemy troops and supplies to Laos where our allies had lost the Plain of Jarres, and to Cambodia where our allies are in danger of losing the entire country. Defeat of any type, as Nixon has pointed out in his book, *Six Crises*, usually arouses in him a hostile, retaliatory action.